

**REMARKS**

The indication of allowable subject matter in claims 14-16 is acknowledged and appreciated. In view of the following remarks, it is respectfully submitted that all claims are in condition for allowance.

Claims 13-16 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph. It is respectfully submitted that the enclosed amendment obviates the alleged indefiniteness. Accordingly, it is respectfully requested that this rejection be withdrawn.

Claim 13 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102 as being anticipated by USP No. 6,440,542 to Kariya. This rejection is respectfully traversed because Kariya is not prior art to the present application. Specifically, Kariya was published on August 27, 2002, whereas the present application has an effective U.S. filing date of November 8, 2001 based on parent application 09/986,453. Moreover, the present application claims priority to JP 2000-397329 filed on December 27, 2000. In order to perfect Applicant's claim to foreign priority, enclosed is a certified English translation of the priority document JP 2000-397329 for this application. It is noted that Kariya is based on international application WO 01/42006. However, because WO 01/42006 was published in a non-English language (i.e., Japanese), the filing date of the international application can NOT be used for prior art purposes (see MPEP § 2136.03(II)(B)).

Accordingly, it is respectfully requested that the rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 102 be withdrawn.

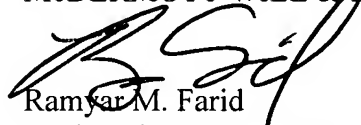
**CONCLUSION**

Having fully responded to all matters raised in the Office Action, Applicants submit that all claims are in condition for allowance, an indication for which is respectfully solicited. If there are any outstanding issues that might be resolved by an interview or an Examiner's amendment, the Examiner is requested to call Applicants' attorney at the telephone number shown below.

To the extent necessary, a petition for an extension of time under 37 C.F.R. 1.136 is hereby made. Please charge any shortage in fees due in connection with the filing of this paper, including extension of time fees, to Deposit Account 500417 and please credit any excess fees to such deposit account.

Respectfully submitted,

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